

## Crop Production

# No boost found from bean treatment

By ANNTONER

**C**ROP consultants Dan Steiner and Ben Pinkelman of Northeast Ag Consulting in Hartington have wondered whether to recommend that their clients use CruiserMaxx-Pak-treated soybeans or not. It was an additional cost, about \$10 to \$11 an acre.

But the combined insecticide and fungicide seed treatment was reputed to be effective against early-season bean leaf beetles. Sometimes overwintering beetles show up to start feeding on soybeans as soon as they emerge.

The crop consultants received a Nebraska Soybean Board grant in 2006 to look at the economics of using CruiserMaxx-Pak-treated soybeans. The study will be continued in 2007.

The replicated strips were placed in the middle of center-pivot-irrigated fields. The strips were 240 feet wide and half a mile long, replicated three times.

Two fields were dedicated to the CruiserMaxx-Pak study. Each field was planted to the same variety of soybeans. The variable was the use of treated or untreated seed. A field near Coleridge was planted May 6 and a field near Madison was planted May 13.

At the Coleridge site, CruiserMaxx-Pak plots had defoliation from bean leaf beetles on about 10% of the soybeans

## At a glance

- Consultants examine effectiveness of insecticide-fungicide treatment.
- The research project was funded by the Nebraska Soybean Board.
- It showed no yield increase with the treatment.

by May 30, while the untreated plots showed some defoliation on nearly every plant. But Tom Hunt, UNL entomologist, says the bean leaf beetle

numbers were below the economic threshold for treatment in both plots. There were no significant differences in soybean aphid numbers, although populations were very low.

At Madison, the CruiserMaxx-Pak-treated soybeans also had fewer bean leaf beetles, but their numbers weren't high in either type of plot. However, soybean aphid and white fly numbers built up in the field regardless of whether it was treated with CruiserMaxx-Pak or not. The field was treated for aphids,

also killing the white flies.

The Coleridge CruiserMaxx-Pak plots yielded 67.4 bushels per acre, while the untreated seed produced 67.5 bushels per acre. At the Madison field, CruiserMaxx-Pak seed produced 67.7 bushels per acre, while untreated seed produced half a bushel less, 67.2.

Their conclusion: Under 2006 conditions, while CruiserMaxx-Pak did reduce bean leaf beetle numbers and feeding on soybeans, it did not increase yield so it did not justify the expense.

## Plots show you can safely lower bean population

**C**ROP consultants Dan Steiner and Ben Pinkelman and participating farmers in the 2006 study also looked for the most economical soybean seeding rates. Four fields were involved in the study. Three were pivot irrigated, one was dryland. Two fields were on a 20-inch-row spacing; two were on a 30-inch-row spacing.

The average yield by soybean planting population was as follows:

- 100,000 population, 53.63 bushels per acre, \$20.34 seed cost per acre
- 120,000 population, 52.99 bushels per acre, \$24.41 seed cost per acre
- 140,000 population, 52.22 bushels per acre, \$28.47 seed cost/acre
- 160,000 population, 53.13 bushels per acre, \$32.54 seed cost per acre
- 180,000 population, 53.72 bushels per acre, \$36.61 seed cost per acre

Steiner says there wasn't more than a bushel and a half difference from highest to lowest population. But interestingly enough, the lowest and highest populations yielded the most beans, he adds. Assuming \$30 per 50-pound bag for the price of seed, the 100,000 population produced the greatest economic return per acre.

"We're not willing to recommend populations as low as 100,000 yet," says Steiner. "But we will advise farmers to lower their planting populations to maybe the 140,000 range."

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